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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6409
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2624
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 001647

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STATE FOR EUR/RPM, EUR/UBI, SA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/28/2016
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [NL](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/AFGHANISTAN: DUTCH REMAIN COMMITTED
DESPITE FIRST CASUALTIES

Classified By: CDA Chat Blakeman, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (C) Summary: The Dutch commitment to its ISAF-III Uruzgan deployment is not wavering in the face of initial casualties. On July 26, two Dutch officers died in a helicopter crash in eastern Afghanistan (which also took U.S. and other lives). Defense Minister Henk Kamp issued a public statement on July 27 stressing Dutch commitment to stay the course even though the "important task" of the Dutch mission carries "great risk." MFA officials echoed Kamp's statement. Public reaction has been muted; Parliament has requested an investigation into the cause of the crash, but so far there have been no calls to suspend the mission. End summary.

MOD: Mission an "Important Task" With Risk

12. (C) Defense Minister Kamp made a brief statement July 27 to the press, noting his first thoughts were of the family and friends of the two Dutch soldiers. He said the accident was a "blow" to the colleagues of the deceased. Kamp indicated that the Dutch would stay the course regarding their deployment. The Dutch military, along with other partner militaries, he said, are working to improve the future of the people of Afghanistan -- "this is an important task that carries great risk. These fallen soldiers know that they have earned our respect for their sacrifice." Uniformed members of the Dutch armed forces expressed similar sentiments to members of USDAO The Hague.

MFA: GONL Committed Despite Casualties

13. (C) MFA Acting Director for Security Affairs Joop Nijssen told polmiloff July 28 that the GONL will stand firm despite these first casualties. Nijssen said the Dutch expect further losses; they knew this when they agreed to undertake the mission.

Parliament Demands an Investigation

14. (C) Response to the crash has been relatively muted thus far, although members of parliament have requested an investigation regarding the cause of the accident. Members also echoed questions posed by the AFMP/FNV (largest Dutch military labor union) why Dutch soldiers were flying aboard civil and not military helicopters. To date, no parliamentarian has requested the mission be suspended due to

the accident.

BLAKEMAN